

## DFT study of $\text{SCN}^-$ adsorption effect on structural and electronic properties of $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$ fullerenes

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### ABSTRACT

Utilizing density functional theory (DFT) calculations, the adsorption characteristics and electronic structure of thiocyanate anion ( $\text{SCN}^-$ ) through nitrogen and sulfur heads upon the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface were investigated by the B3LYP functional and 6-31 + G\*\* standard basis set. The results express that the covalent interaction of  $\text{SCN}^-$  through the nitrogen head ( $-3.08$  eV) is stronger in comparison with the sulfur head of  $\text{SCN}^-$  ( $-2.32$  eV) to the fullerene surface. Additionally, the interaction of two  $\text{SCN}^-$  through nitrogen head has weaker surface adsorption on the silicon-carbon (Si-C) atom ( $-1.27$  eV) in comparison with the Si-Si atom ( $-2.78$  eV) of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene. The influence of  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption on the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface was characterized by the infrared (IR) absorption spectrum. A significant orbital hybridization between  $\text{SCN}^-$  and  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerenes occurred during the adsorption process, according to the computed density of states (DOS). According to the analysis of binding energy, energy gap, and dipole moment,  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene can be applied to  $\text{SCN}^-$  removal applications. Based on the thermodynamic parameters, the negative Gibbs free energy ( $\Delta G$ ) and enthalpy change ( $\Delta H$ ) values confirmed that the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption by the nitrogen heads on the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface was spontaneous and exothermic.

### 1. Introduction

Silicon carbide (SiC) nanostructures of various dimensions (for instance, the 0-D nanoclusters, 1-D nanotubes, and 2-D ultrathin films) are currently the focus of extensive research because of their special qualities (high hardness, high resistance, excellent thermal conductivity, wide bandgap, and excellent chemical and physical stability) [1].

Moreover, researchers have reported SiC nanostructures as a practical substrate for biomaterial and biosensing applications [2,3]. The chemical, electronic, and magnetic characteristics of nanoclusters have been shown to be significantly influenced by their size and composition [4–6]. Up until now, a lot of research has been done on the advantages of SiC nanostructures for the adsorption of gaseous pollutants, especially when using computational methods [7,8]. For instance, Solimannejad

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and co-authors assessed the cyanogen (NCCN) adsorption on the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> and Si<sub>12</sub>CuC<sub>12</sub> nanocages using DFT calculations [9]. They have shown the weak physisorption of the NCCN onto the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> surface. In addition, they found that the structural and electronic characteristics of pure Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> did not vary drastically during the adsorption process. Javan used DFT calculations to study the adsorption behavior of CO and NO gases on zigzag (10,0) SiCNT and armchair (6,6) SiCNT nanotubes and Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> nanocages under various conditions [10]. Their findings suggest that both forms of nanotubes can adsorb a CO molecule through chemisorption and physisorption, since their binding energies are around 0.95 and 0.89 eV in the most stable configuration. The adsorption of NO molecule over SiC nanotubes and nanocages was slightly better than the adsorption of CO in its most stable configuration. Alshahrani and co-authors studied SCN<sup>-</sup>@C<sub>60</sub> fullerenes and found that the SCN<sup>-</sup> adsorption via its nitrogen head upon the fullerene surface was electrostatic, leading to improvements in the electronic sensitivity of fullerenes to the SCN<sup>-</sup> [11]. Baei and co-authors studied the thiocyanate anion (SCN<sup>-</sup>) adsorption on the outer wall of single-walled boron nitride nanotubes (SWBNNTs) by DFT calculations [12]. They have found that the boron nitride nanotubes can serve as a new adsorbent to remove SCN<sup>-</sup> anion. Earlier studies illustrated the adsorption of SCN<sup>-</sup> upon the carbon, boron nitride, boron phosphide, aluminum nitride, and aluminum phosphide nanotubes [13–15]. Recently, the adsorption behavior of hydrazine (N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>) by Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> nanocages and the detection performance of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> nanocages for this molecule were reported by Rahimi and Solimannejad [16]. The aim of the present study is to investigate the adsorption behavior and electronic structure of SCN<sup>-</sup> interacting with the outer surface of pure SiC fullerenes to gain further insight into the development of new adsorbents for the removal and detection of toxic molecules.

## 2. Computational details

Using the Gaussian 09 [17], GaussSum [18], and GaussView 5.0.8 suite of programs [19], the analyses of geometric analysis, Mulliken population analysis (MPA), and density of states (DOS) were calculated for each system under consideration. Geometry optimization was carried out using the 6–31 + G\*\* basis set at the B3LYP level [20,21]. The following equation was used to calculate the adsorption energies (E<sub>ad</sub>) of SCN<sup>-</sup> on the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> surfaces.

$$E_{ad} = E_{Si_{12}C_{12}-SCN} - (E_{Si_{12}C_{12}} + E_{SCN^-}) \quad (1)$$

where E<sub>(Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>-SCN)</sub>, E<sub>Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub></sub>, and E<sub>SCN</sub>, respectively, are the total energies of adsorption complexes, pure Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>, and isolated SCN<sup>-</sup>. Physicochemical properties of SCN<sup>-</sup>, SCN<sup>-</sup> interacting Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerenes were calculated based on the following quantum molecular descriptors (QMD):

$$\mu = -\frac{1}{2}(I + A) \quad (2)$$

$$\chi = -\mu \quad (3)$$

$$\eta = \frac{1}{2}(I - A) \quad (4)$$

$$S = \frac{1}{2\eta} \quad (5)$$

$$\omega = \frac{\mu^2}{2\eta} \quad (6)$$

where  $\mu$ ,  $I$ ,  $A$ ,  $\chi$ ,  $\eta$ ,  $S$ , and  $\omega$  values are chemical potential, ionization potential, electron affinity, electronegativity, global hardness, global softness, and electrophilicity index, respectively [22–24]. The  $I$  and  $A$  values were in order defined as negative orbital energies of the highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO),  $-E_{HOMO}$ , and the lowest

unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO),  $-E_{LUMO}$ , based on Koopmans' approximation.

## 3. Result and discussion

### 3.1. Adsorption behavior of SCN<sup>-</sup> on the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerenes

At the B3LYP/6–31 + G\*\* level of theory, the relaxed geometries of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> and SCN<sup>-</sup> are calculated. Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> consists of 8 hexagonal and 6 tetragonal rings with Th symmetry and sp<sup>2</sup> hybridization. In pure Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>, there are two distinct types of Si–C bonds: one with a bond length of 1.835 Å is shared by a hexagonal and a tetragonal ring (bond 6–4), and the other with a bond length of 1.777 Å is shared by two hexagonal rings (bond 6–6), according to the most recent computational analysis (Fig. 1). This result is consistent with research conducted in the past by Solimannejad and colleagues [25]. The IR spectrum of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> demonstrates major absorption peaks at approximately 334, 404, 595, 750, 766, 999, and 1042 cm<sup>-1</sup> due to the Si–C band [26]. The IR spectrum of SCN<sup>-</sup> shows the main absorption peaks at stretching modes  $\nu_1$  (SC, ~739 cm<sup>-1</sup>) and  $\nu_3$  (CN, ~2161 cm<sup>-1</sup>), and a doubly degenerate deformation  $\nu_2$  (SCN<sup>-</sup>, ~484 cm<sup>-1</sup>). Fig. 1 also displays the lengths of the C≡N and C–S bonds in linear SCN<sup>-</sup> molecules and exhibits C<sub>2</sub> point group symmetry. This diagram represents that the bond lengths between C≡N, as well as C–S, are approximately 1.823 and 1.672 Å, respectively.

During the adsorption process, when SCN<sup>-</sup> through N-head closed to the Si atom of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>, the bond lengths between Si<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>1</sub> and Si<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>2</sub> were increased to 1.895 and 1.841 Å, while when SCN<sup>-</sup> through S-head closed to Si atom the bond lengths were increased to 1.890 and 1.839 Å, respectively (see Fig. 2). These bond length changes occurred during the adsorption process, resulting in strong bonding between the nitrogen atom of the SCN<sup>-</sup> and the substrate surface. After the adsorption process, the C–S and C≡N bond lengths of SCN<sup>-</sup> were altered to 1.187 and 1.605 Å in model I and 1.169 and 1.699 Å in model II, respectively. Khalaji and colleagues [27] experimentally showed that the C–S and C≡N bond lengths of SCN<sup>-</sup> are 1.642 and 1.162 Å, respectively. These experimental results are in good agreement with our results. In addition, the adsorption energy of SCN<sup>-</sup> obtained from the N-side atoms is larger than that of the S-side atoms.

In the most stable state, for SCN<sup>-</sup> adsorption through N-side on Si atom of the pure Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>, the two species are separated by 1.765 Å and has an E<sub>bin</sub> of –3.09 eV. These results suggest that the E<sub>bin</sub> can be viewed as the covalent interaction. Electron localization function (ELF) plots (model I) of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> and SCN<sup>-</sup> interacting with Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> are calculated by the Multiwfn software package [28] as shown in Fig. 3. This image reflects the presence of a new covalent bond between the silicon atom (blue) of the fullerene and the oxygen atom (red) of the molecule [29]. Similar to this, the SCN<sup>-</sup> adsorption in the most stable configuration (N-side on C atom of the pure Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub>) has an E<sub>bin</sub> of –0.410 eV and a distance of 1.393 Å, suggesting a weak bonding during adsorption process owing to the electrostatic interaction. Recently, Alshahrani and co-authors demonstrated the interaction of SCN<sup>-</sup> through the N-side on the perfect C<sub>60</sub> with an energy of –0.49 eV and an interaction distance is 1.479 Å [30]. When SCN<sup>-</sup> through S-side adsorbed on Si atom of Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerene, the estimated distance between the two species is 2.245 Å and an E<sub>bin</sub> of –2.32 eV (Fig. 4).

After adsorbing SCN<sup>-</sup> onto the fullerene surface from the S side, the length of C–N and C–S bonds changed to 1.169 Å and 1.699 Å, respectively. The significant charges of about 0.523 |e| and 0.115 |e| are transferred from Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerene to the SCN<sup>-</sup> through the N-side and S-side based on the results of MPA analysis. Furthermore, it is obvious that SCN<sup>-</sup> computed binding energy over the surface of the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerene is more considerable than those on C<sub>60</sub> and BNNT surfaces [11,12]. Furthermore, it is obvious that the determined binding energy of SCN<sup>-</sup> upon the surface of the Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> fullerene is more significant than that of CNT, BNNT, and AlNNT surfaces [12,13,31]. Fig. 5 in the model I

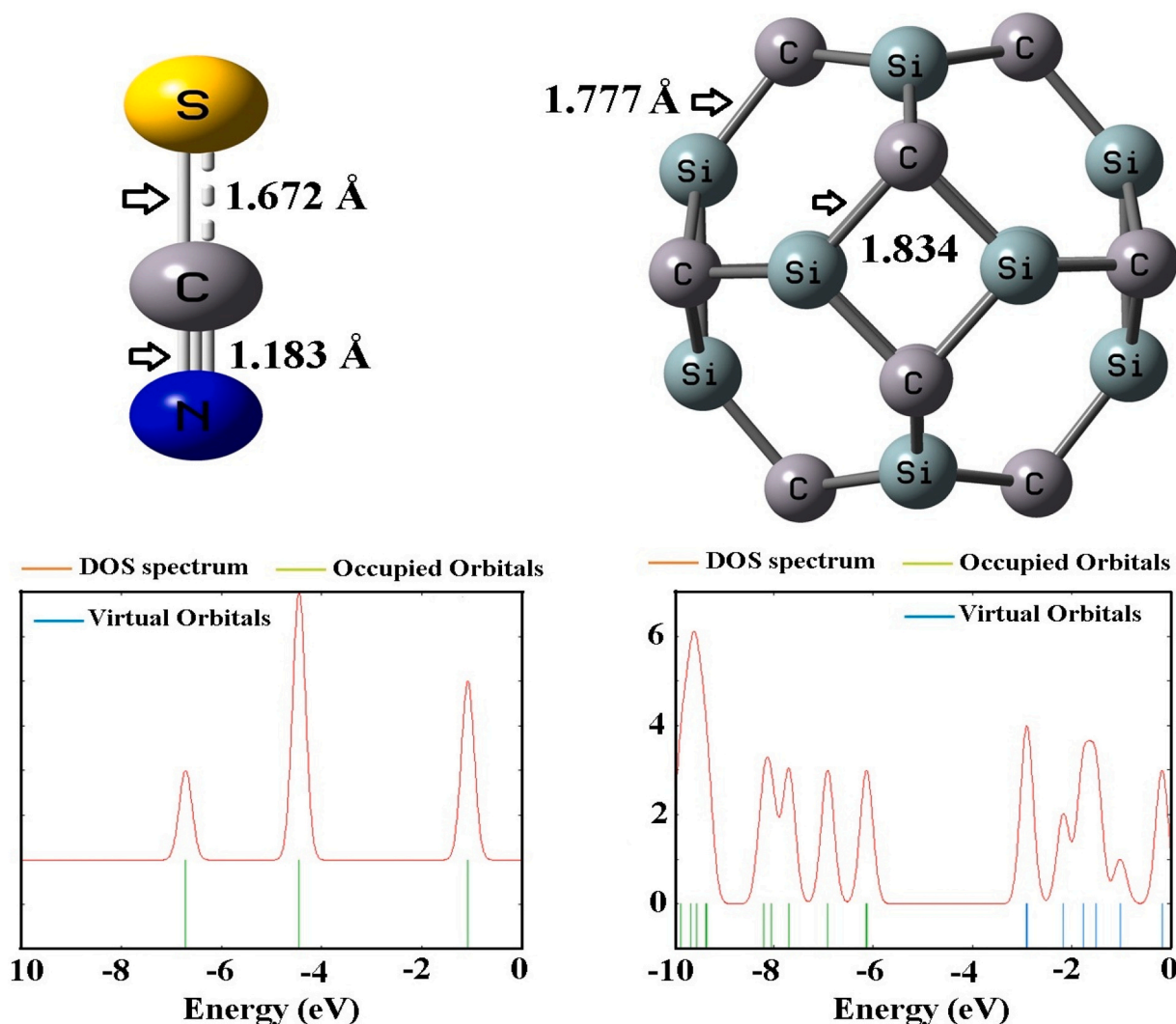


Fig. 1. Optimized structures of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene and  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecule.

exhibits theoretical results of three infrared (IR)-active vibrations at  $468\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $980\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , and  $2183\text{ cm}^{-1}$  corresponding to  $\nu_1$  ( $\text{SCN}^-$ ),  $\nu_2$  (SC), and  $\nu_3$  (CN), respectively. This suggests that the theoretical results are close to the experimental results mentioned by Lee and co-authors [32]. A sharp peak appearing in the  $515\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region is characteristic of  $\nu$ (Si-NCS) for the model I. The IR absorption peaks of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene in interaction with the  $\text{SCN}^-$  changed to  $804$  and  $933\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , while the peaks in the free model appeared at  $750$ ,  $766$ ,  $999$ , and  $1042\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . This result is agreed with obtained results by Karbovnyk and co-authors [33]. Based on the thermodynamic parameters, the changes of  $\Delta G$  ( $-2.87\text{ eV}$ ) and  $\Delta H$  ( $-3.31\text{ eV}$ ) confirmed that the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption by the nitrogen heads on  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface (model I) was spontaneous and exothermic [34]. For model I, the value of  $\Delta H$  is more negative compared to the  $\Delta G$  value, suggesting a decrease in entropy [15,35].

The interaction between the two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules adsorbed on the Si-Si atoms of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene is stronger than that of the Si-C atoms of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene (Figs. 6–7). The adsorption energies of the two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules on the Si-Si and the Si-C atoms are approximately  $-2.78$  and  $-1.27\text{ eV}$  respectively. An increase in  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules on the Si-C atoms of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  leads to a decrease in the adsorption energy. This result indicates that the Si-Si atoms of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  have a high tendency to adsorb more  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules. Soltani et al. reported the adsorption energy of two  $\text{SCN}^-$  on the B-B atoms of  $\text{B}_{12}\text{N}_{12}$  fullerene is chemisorption ( $-0.89\text{ eV}$ ), a covalent bond is expected to form when each configuration interacts with  $\text{SCN}^-$  [36]. They also found that the

adsorption energy and distance interaction of  $\text{SCN}^-$  through N-side and S-side on the  $\text{B}_{11}\text{SiN}_{12}$  fullerene in order is  $-1.61\text{ eV}$  ( $1.90\text{ \AA}$ ) and  $-1.22\text{ eV}$  ( $2.55\text{ \AA}$ ). Recently, Alshahrani and co-authors demonstrated the adsorption behavior of  $\text{SCN}^-$  through the N-side on the pure  $\text{C}_{60}$  with an energy of  $-0.49\text{ eV}$  and an interaction distance is  $1.479\text{ \AA}$  [11]. It is predictable that the size and direction of the dipole moment ( $\mu_D$ ) vector will change as a molecule gets closer to or farther away from a substrate. Examining the results of the  $\mu_D$  for all configurations, it is hypothesized that the  $\mu_D$  increased significantly as  $\text{SCN}^-$  approached different configurations of substrate. Our analysis represent that the  $\mu_D$  values for pure  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  and  $\text{SCN}^-$  in order are  $0.00$  and  $2.64$  Debye (Table 1). The  $\mu_D$  values of both complexes increased to  $18.87$  and  $17.63$  Debye when  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorbed to the N-side and S-side positions, respectively, which is comparable with the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption through N-side on the  $\text{B}_{12}\text{N}_{12}$  ( $18.25$  Debye) and  $\text{B}_{11}\text{SiN}_{12}$  ( $15.28$  Debye) fullerenes [37]. As a result, dipole moment analysis indicates that  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption on  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene caused an increase in polarization and a change in dipole moment [38].

### 3.2. Molecular orbital (MO) analysis and relative stabilities

Fig. 8 represents frontier molecular orbitals (HOMO and LUMO) for a deeper understanding of  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption on the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface. The HOMO ( $E_{\text{HOMO}}: -6.13\text{ eV}$ ) and LUMO ( $E_{\text{LUMO}}: -2.91\text{ eV}$ ) orbitals for  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  [39] are distributed around the more electronegative atoms (C)

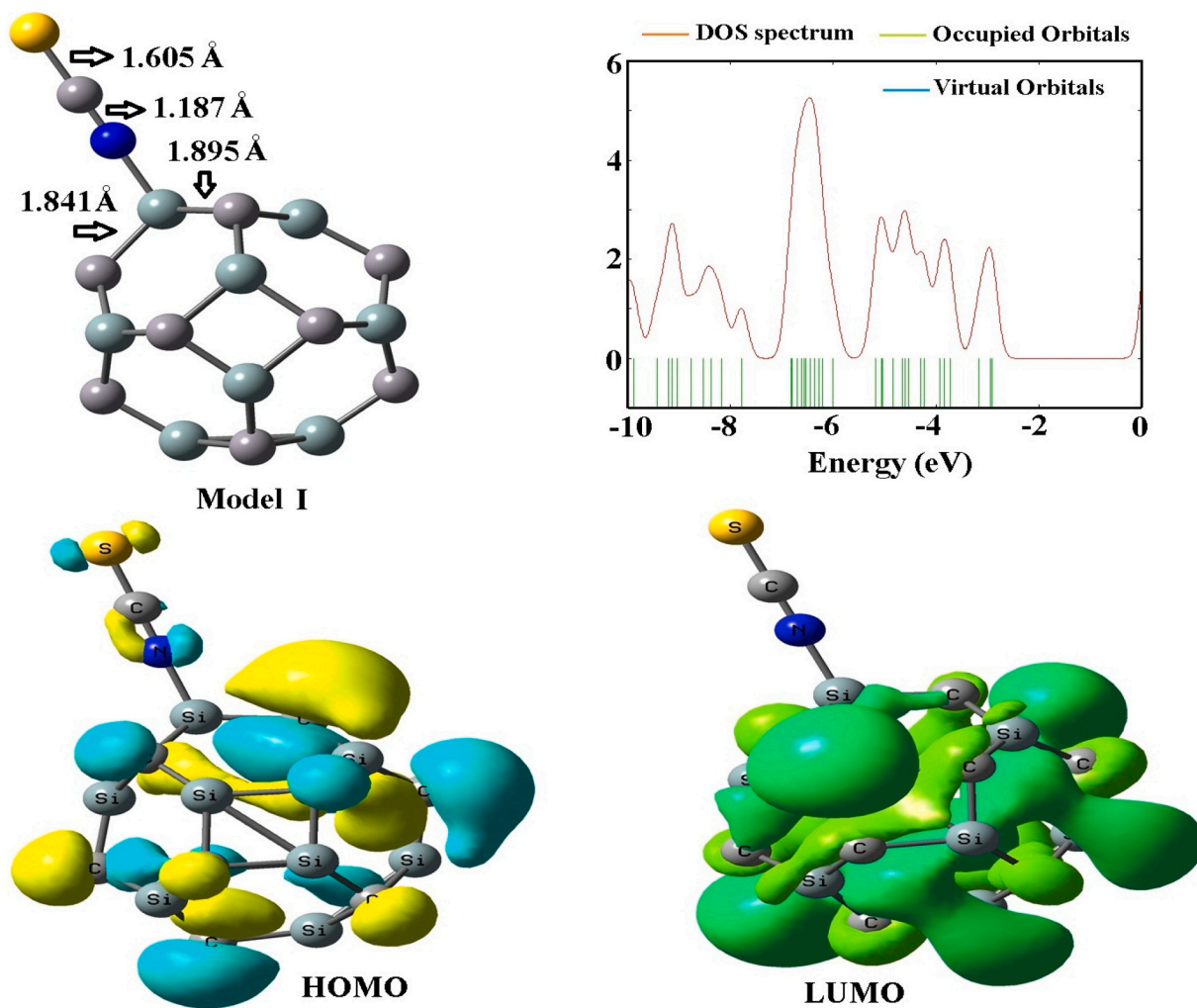


Fig. 2. The optimized structure, FMO, and DOS plots for the  $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  complex.

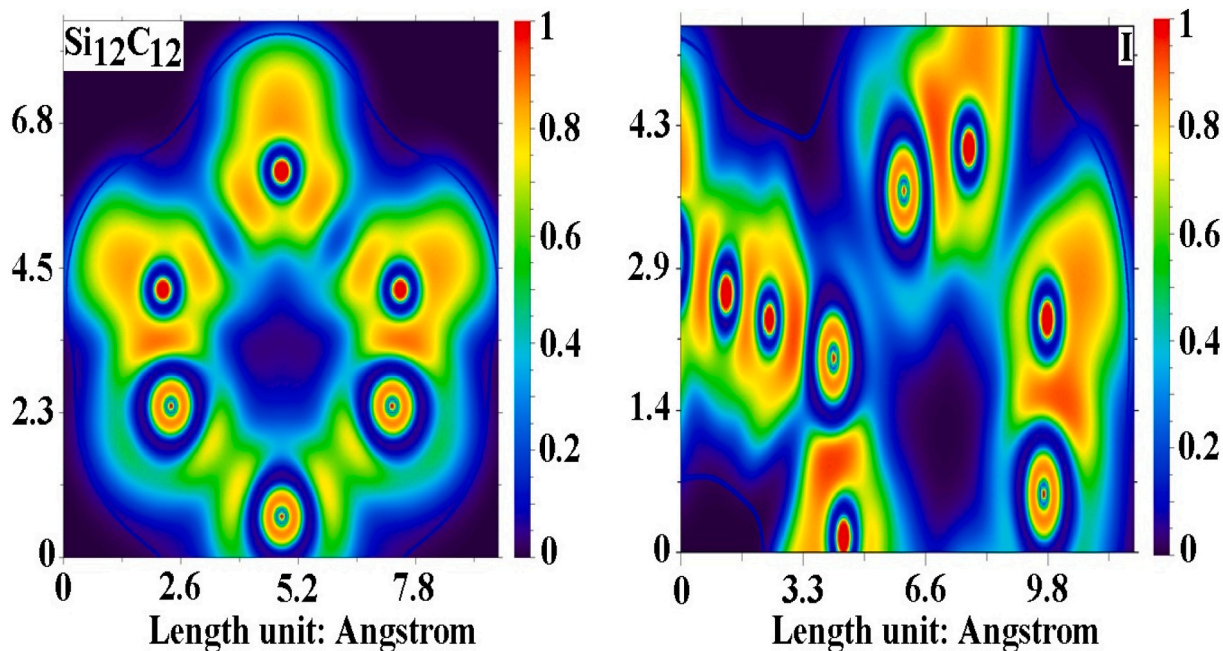


Fig. 3. ELF plots for the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  and  $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  complex (model I).

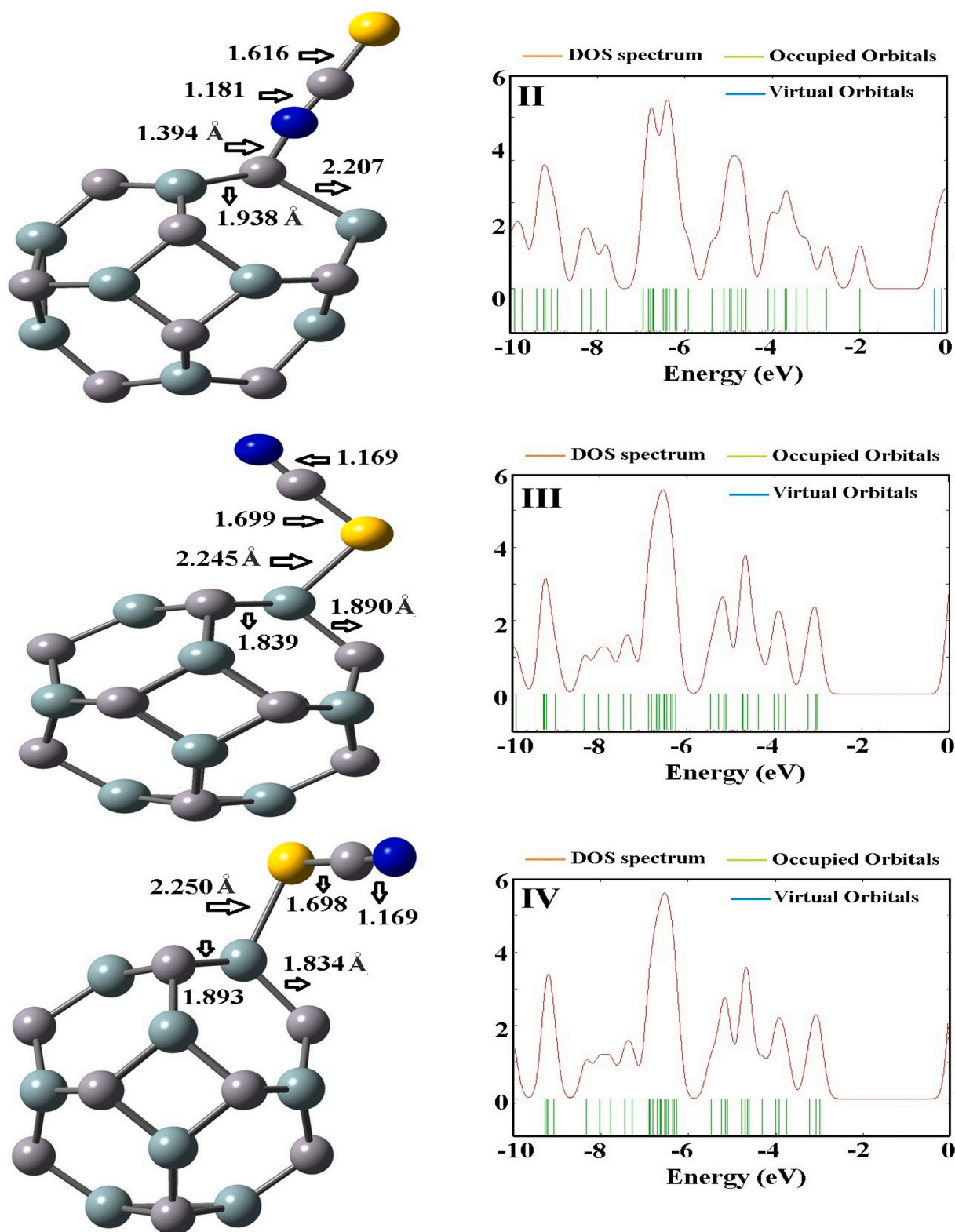
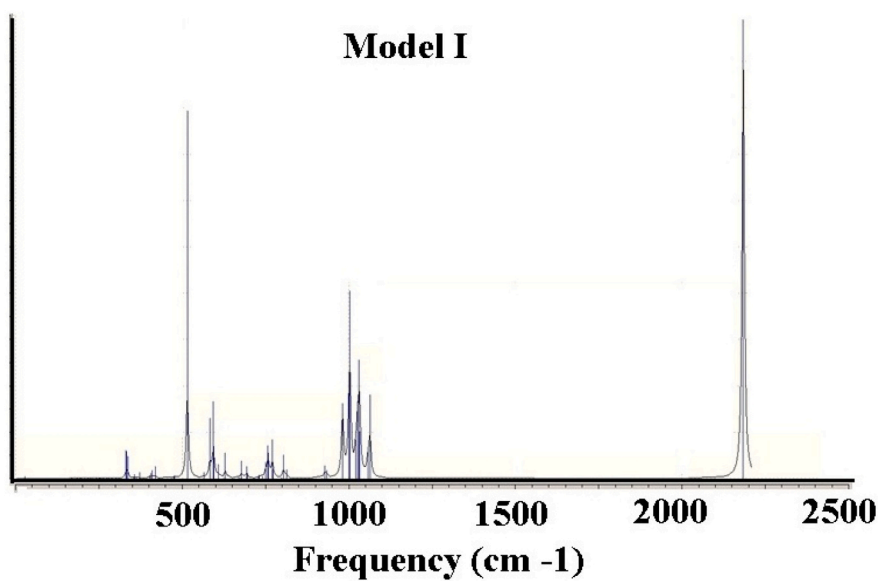
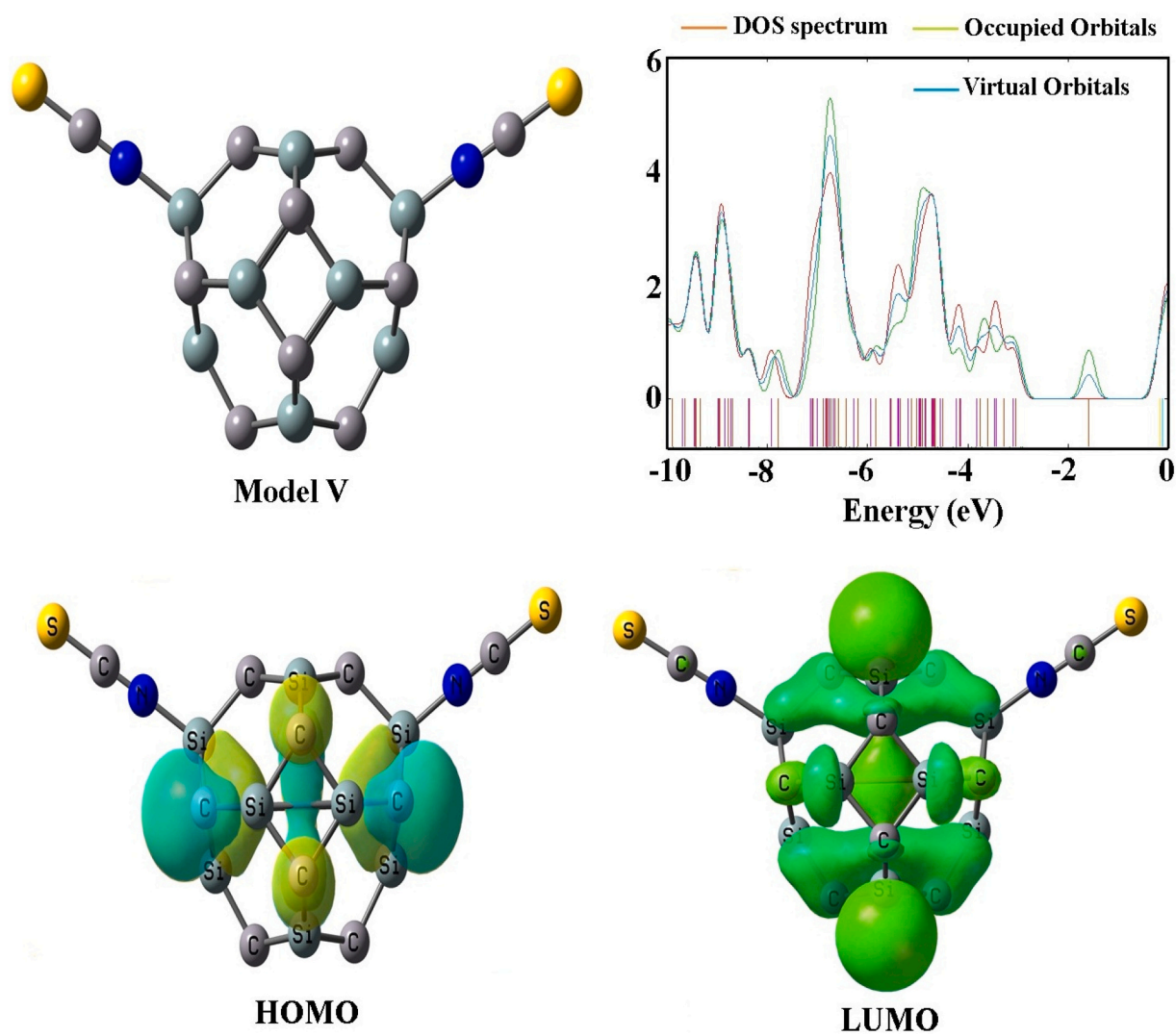


Fig. 4. The optimized geometries and DOS plots for the different complexes.

and the electropositive atoms (Si), while the HOMO ( $E_{\text{HOMO}}: -1.09$  eV) and LUMO ( $E_{\text{LUMO}}: 4.10$  eV) orbitals for  $\text{SCN}^-$  is evenly distributed around the S–C–N bond, as shown in Fig. 8.

The computed energy gap ( $E_g$ ) values for the pure  $\text{SCN}^-$  and  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  in order are about 3.01 and 3.22 eV (Table 1). This amount of  $E_g$  for the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate indicates semiconductor features [40]. Fig. 2 shows

that the HOMO orbital for the most stable compound (model I) is slightly situated around the S–C–N bond and is evenly distributed on the C atoms of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  at an energy level of  $-2.92$  eV. The LUMO orbital of model I is uniformly situated throughout the Si–C bonds of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  at an energy level of 0.12 eV. In contrast, the HOMO (alpha) orbital for two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules adsorbed on the Si–Si atoms of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate is

Fig. 5. IR spectrum of SCN<sup>-</sup>/Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> complex.Fig. 6. The FMO and DOS plots for the two SCN<sup>-</sup>/Si<sub>12</sub>C<sub>12</sub> (V) complexes.

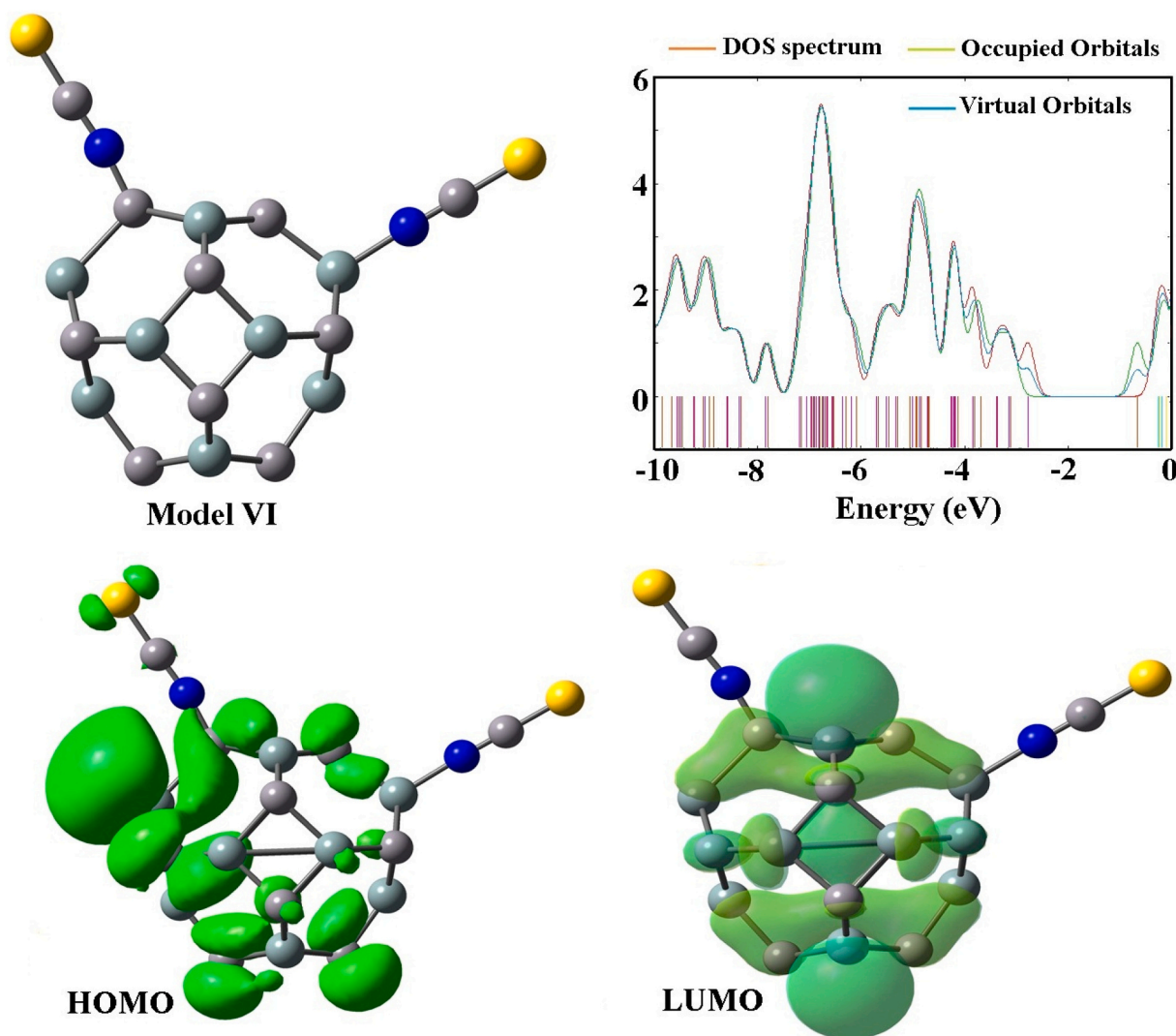


Fig. 7. The FMO and DOS plots for the two  $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  (VI) complexes.

Table 1

Calculated HOMO energies ( $E_{\text{HOMO}}/\text{eV}$ ), LUMO energies ( $E_{\text{LUMO}}/\text{eV}$ ), dipole moment ( $\mu_{\text{D}}/\text{Debye}$ ), and energy gap ( $E_{\text{g}}/\text{eV}$ ) for the pure and their complexes.

Property	$\text{SCN}^-$	$\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$	N-side (I)	N-side (II)	S-side (III)	S-side (IV)	N-side (V)	N-side (VI)
$E_{\text{HOMO}}/\text{eV}$	-1.09	-6.13	-2.92	-2.01	-3.03	-3.0	-3.09	-2.78
$E_{\text{LUMO}}/\text{eV}$	4.10	-2.91	0.12	-0.30	0.04	0.04	-0.13	-0.26
$E_{\text{g}}/\text{eV}$	3.10	3.22	3.04	1.71	3.07	3.04	2.96	2.52
$\mu_{\text{D}}/\text{Debye}$	0.67	0.0	18.87	20.81	17.63	18.56	17.10	20.68
$E_{\text{F}}/\text{eV}$	-	-4.52	-1.40	-1.16	-1.50	-1.48	-1.61	-1.52
$\Delta E_{\text{g}}/\%$	-	-	5.59	46.89	4.66	5.59	8.07	21.74

evenly distributed on the C atoms of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  at an energy level of  $-3.09$  eV, while the LUMO orbital is evenly distributed on the Si—C bonds of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  and slightly situated on the carbon atoms of two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules at an energy level of  $-0.13$  eV (Figs. 6–7). The DOS of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate was compared with those of the  $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  and  $2\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  complexes in order to examine the binding effect on the electronic features of these complexes (Figs. 2, 4, 6, 7). According to DOS analysis, the  $E_{\text{g}}$  value of  $\text{SCN}^-$  through N-side ( $3.04$  eV) and S-side ( $3.07$  eV) interacting with  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  is slightly altered when compared with two  $\text{SCN}^-$  through N-side interacting with  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate ( $2.96$  eV). These findings suggest that the  $\text{SCN}^-$  interacting with the silicon atom of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  does not significantly affect the electronic properties of the substrate, while the adsorption of  $\text{SCN}^-$  on the carbon atom of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$

could improve the sensitivity of the substrate to the molecule [41]. Furthermore, the Fermi level ( $E_{\text{F}}$ ) results show a value of  $-4.52$  eV in order for the pure  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  to  $-1.40$  eV and  $-1.50$  eV for  $\text{SCN}^-$  through N-side and S-side positions on the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate, extract the strong charge transfer as probable. For two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules interacting with the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate, the value of  $E_{\text{F}}$  is changed to  $-1.61$  eV. After the adsorption process, the energy gap change ( $\Delta E_{\text{g}}$ ) in model II ( $46.89\%$ ) is reduced than in model I ( $5.59\%$ ). Therefore, unlike silicon atoms in  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$ , carbon atoms in  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  can efficiently sense  $\text{SCN}^-$ . The results of  $\Delta E_{\text{g}}$  suggest that the role of carbon atoms in the substrate for the detection of one or two  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecules (model VI) (Fig. 9). Iman and co-authors experimentally showed the role of  $\text{Co}_7$  clusters in the detection of thiocyanate anions by spectroscopic and DFT methods [42].

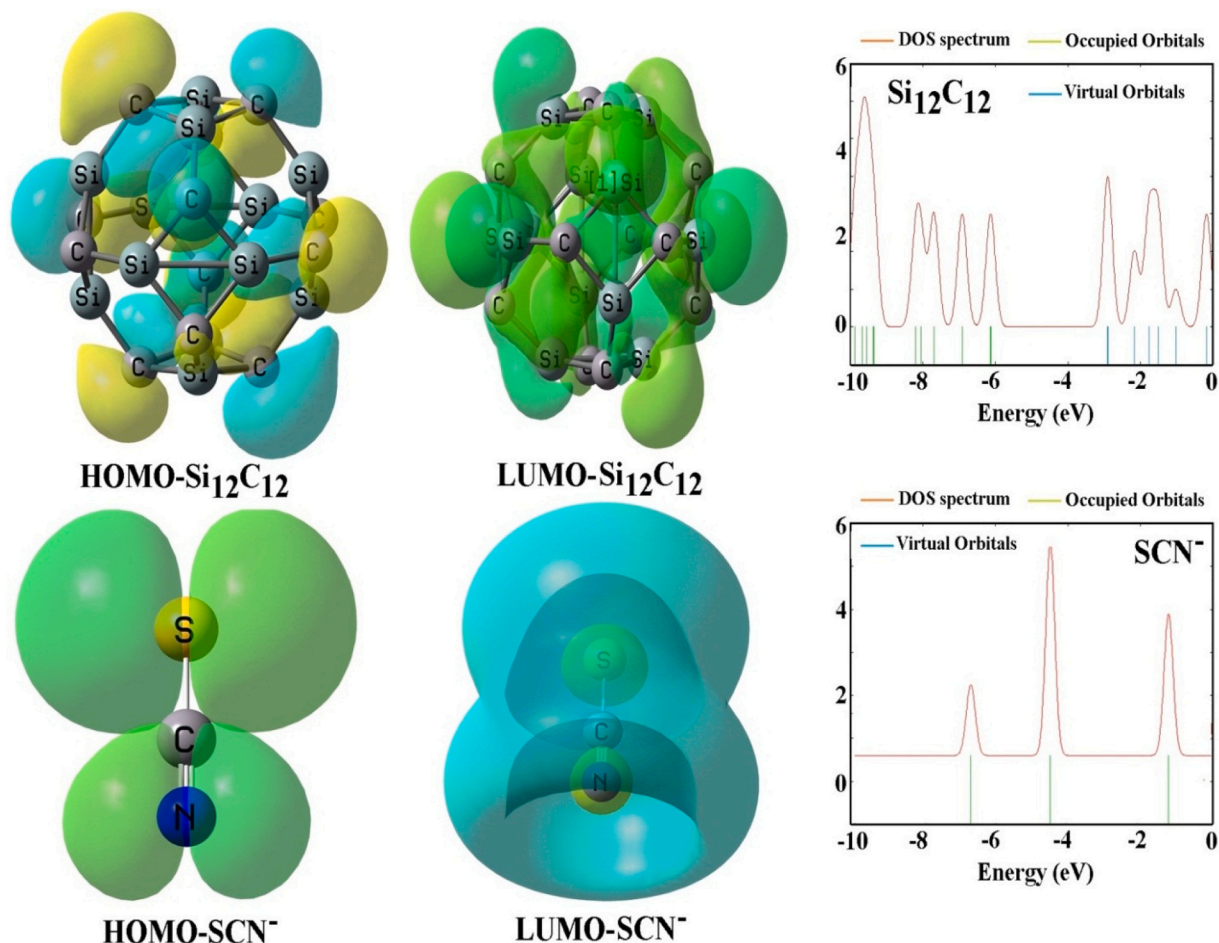


Fig. 8. The FMO plot for the  $\text{SCN}^-$  and  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  compounds.

They found that the  $\text{Co}_7$  cluster has a better quenching ability toward the recognition of  $\text{SCN}^-$  with a better binding constant. Reducing  $E_g$  increases the complex electrical conductivity that can be converted into an electrical signal for  $\text{SCN}^-$  detection by the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate [43]. Therefore, SiC fullerenes can be used to filter out hazardous molecules and gas-sensing fields [44].

### 3.3. QMD for $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$ complexes

The QMD results demonstrate a reduction in energy gap, which causes the decrement in  $I$  from 6.13 eV for pure  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  to 2.92 and 2.01 eV for  $\text{SCN}^-$  via its N-side close to a silicon atom of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene, while the  $A$  value with the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption through N-side on the silicon atom of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  will lead to a reduction from 2.91 eV to 0.12 and 0.30 eV in models I and II, respectively (Table 2). The lowest electronegativity ( $\chi$ ) is calculated for model II (1.16 eV) in comparison with the pure substrate (4.52 eV). The  $\mu$  value for  $\text{SCN}^-$  via its N-side approaching silicon (model I) and carbon (model II) atoms of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate is reduced from  $-4.52$  eV in the perfect substrate to  $-1.52$  and  $-1.16$  eV for  $\text{SCN}^-/\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  complexes, respectively. Based on the chemical potential ( $\mu$ ) analysis, model II has the lowest  $\mu$  value, thus, this complex has less reactivity [45]. The lowest  $\eta$  value was obtained for models I (1.40 eV) and model II (0.86 eV) compared to models III (1.50 eV) and IV (1.48 eV), while the amount of  $\eta$  for the pure substrate is found to be 1.61 eV. This decrement in  $\eta$  value for the complexes is resulting from low electron affinity and ionization potential and leads to its higher reactivity [46]. The highest softness ( $S$ ) is calculated for model I (0.36 eV) and II (0.58 eV) in comparison with the pure substrate (0.31 eV). Adsorption of  $\text{SCN}^-$  via its N-side approaching carbon (model II)

atom of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate is increased in comparison with the  $\text{SCN}^-$  via its N-side approaching silicon (model I) atom of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  substrate. Electrophilicity index ( $\omega$ ) for the  $\text{SCN}^-$  through N-side interacting with  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  has a noticeable reduction from 6.34 eV in the perfect substrate to 0.825 eV (I) and 0.780 eV (II) compared to the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption through N-side in model III (0.788 eV) and model IV (0.780 eV).

## 4. Conclusion

DFT calculations were used for the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption ability on the perfect  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene at the B3LYP/6-31G\*\* level of theory to analyze the geometric, electronic properties, and adsorption behavior. Our computational study demonstrates that the adsorption properties of  $\text{SCN}^-$  through nitrogen head ( $-3.08$  eV) on the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene is most notable when compared to the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption through sulfur head ( $-2.32$  eV). Additionally, the interaction of two  $\text{SCN}^-$  through nitrogen head has weaker surface adsorption on the Si-C atom ( $-1.27$  eV) in comparison with the Si-Si atom ( $-2.78$  eV) of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene. Based on our findings, it seems that silicon atom affection on the interaction of  $\text{SCN}^-$  molecule with the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene as lead to the improvement of adsorption energy. In contrast, the carbon atoms of the  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  have a significant role in the alteration of the electrical conductance and dipole moment of the substrate. A significant orbital hybridization between  $\text{SCN}^-$  and  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerenes occurred during the adsorption process, according to the computed density of states (DOS). Hence, the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption on the carbon atom of  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  (model II) lead to the reduction in  $E_g$  values, ionization potential, chemical hardness, electronegativity, and electrophilicity index. According to the



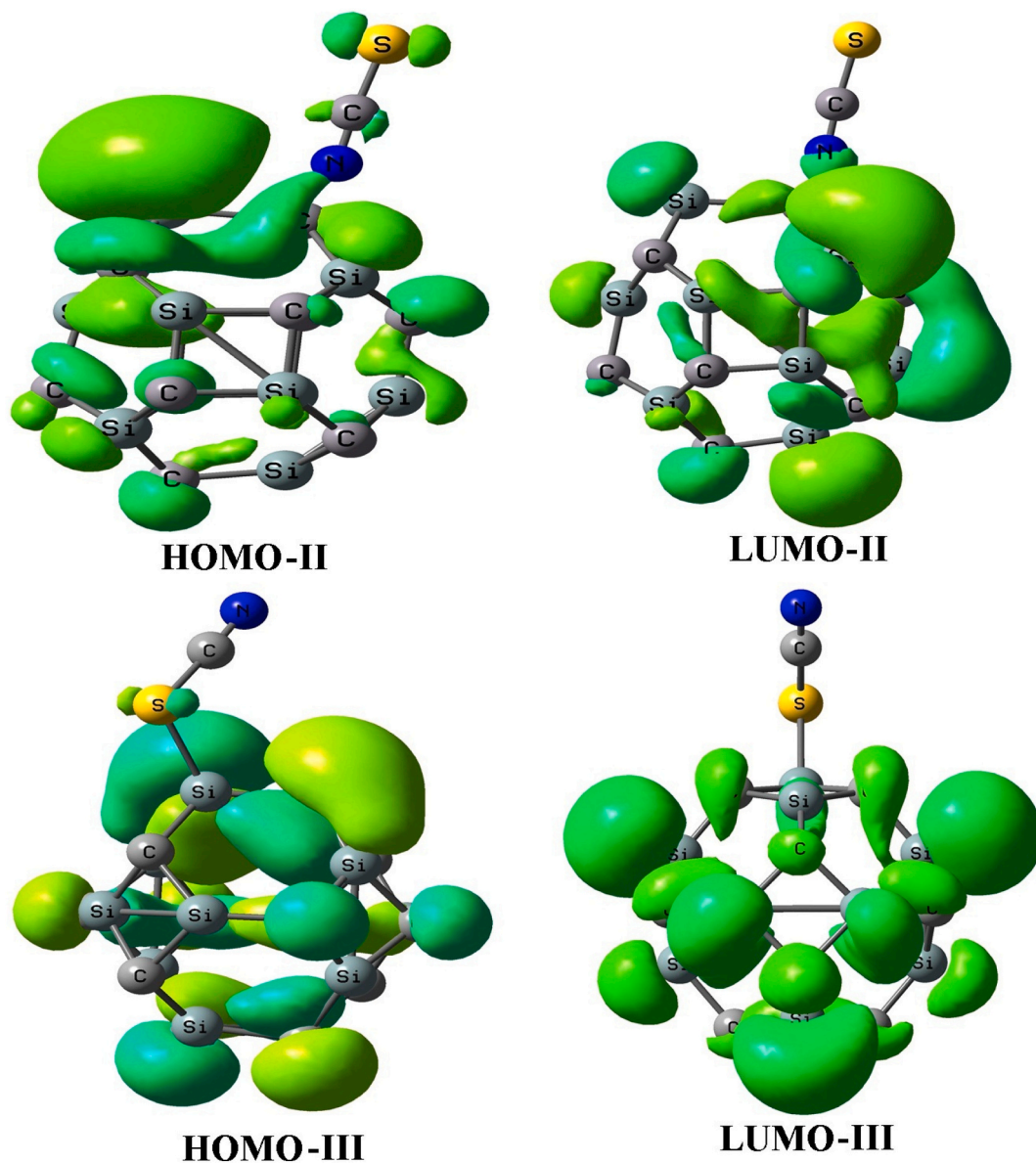


Fig. 9. HOMO and LUMO plots for the  $\text{SCN}^-$  interacting with  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  fullerene.

Table 2

Calculated QMD values for the pure and their complexes.

Property	$\text{SCN}^-$	$\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$	N-side (I)	N-side (II)	S-side (III)	S-side (IV)	N-side (V)	N-side (VI)
$I/\text{eV}$	1.09	6.13	2.92	2.01	3.03	3.0	3.09	2.78
$A/\text{eV}$	-4.10	2.91	0.12	0.30	0.04	0.04	0.13	0.26
$\eta/\text{eV}$	2.59	1.61	1.40	0.86	1.50	1.48	1.48	1.26
$\mu/\text{eV}$	1.51	-4.52	-1.52	-1.16	-1.54	-1.52	-1.61	-1.52
$S/\text{eV}$	0.19	0.31	0.36	0.58	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.40
$\omega/\text{eV}$	0.44	6.34	0.825	0.780	0.788	0.780	0.876	0.916
$\chi/\text{eV}$	-1.51	4.52	1.52	1.16	1.54	1.52	-1.61	1.52

thermodynamic parameters, the negative  $\Delta G$  and  $\Delta H$  values confirmed that the  $\text{SCN}^-$  adsorption by the nitrogen heads on  $\text{Si}_{12}\text{C}_{12}$  surface was spontaneous and exothermic.

#### CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Fangyuan Li:** Supervision, Writing – review & editing. **Fay Fathdal:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Gufran Abd:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Jameel Mohammed Ameen Sulaiman:** Writing

– review & editing. **Safaa Mustafa Hameed:** Writing – review & editing. **Sarah Salah Jalal:** Methodology, Writing – original draft. **Usama S. Altamari:** Methodology, Writing – original draft. **Israa Alhan:** Formal analysis, Software. **Ibrahim H. Alkersan:** Formal analysis, Software. **Ali H. Alsalamy:** Formal analysis, Software. **Elham Tazikeh-Lemeski:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Software. **Andrew Ng Kay Lup:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Software.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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